



McGregor W. Scott
United States Attorney
Eastern District of California

NEWS RELEASE

Sacramento
501 I. Street, Ste 10-100
Sacramento CA 95814
Tel (916) 554-2700
TTY (916) 554-2855

Fresno
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401
Fresno, CA 93721
Tel (559) 497-4000
TTY (559) 497-4500

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Contact: Karen Escobar, 559-497-4000

www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae

**FRESNO BUSINESS OWNER PLEADS GUILTY TO
INTERSTATE DRUG TRAFFICKING**

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that OSCAR ROSALES, 40, the owner of Exclusive Sounds, a stereo and Direct TV business located at 4376 W. Shaw Avenue in Fresno, entered a guilty plea to a large-scale conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute at least 1,000 kilograms, or 2,200 pounds, of marijuana. In pleading guilty, ROSALES admitted that he was the leader of a drug trafficking organization dedicated to the interstate distribution of marijuana.

According to court documents, seven different drug couriers, who were identified during the 17-month investigation of the ROSALES drug trafficking organization, consistently stated that ROSALES was the leader of a long-standing drug enterprise, which distributed millions of dollars of marijuana to numerous locations outside of California, including Arkansas, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Georgia. The couriers indicated that they made numerous shipments of marijuana for ROSALES, and that the loads ranged from 50 to 200 pounds. In his plea agreement, ROSALES admitted that he obtained marijuana from sources in this country and Mexico, and then shipped the drug to destinations across the United States. According to court records, ROSALES was assisted by JOSE NEGRETE, 45, LEONARD HEREDIA, 32, and ANTHONY ROCHA, 36, all of Fresno, who supplied load vehicles for the shipment of the marijuana. Both HEREDIA and ROCHA, former employees of Exclusive Sounds, have already entered guilty pleas to conspiring to distribute marijuana with ROSALES.

Information obtained by drug agents through surveillance and numerous wiretap intercepts of one of ROSALES' cellular telephones during a two-month federal wiretap investigation commencing in February 2005, not only confirmed the extensive nature of the ROSALES' drug trafficking organization but indicated that ROSALES received, stored, and distributed marijuana from his stereo business. In addition, narcotics agents actually witnessed several marijuana transactions directed by ROSALES from January to April 2005, which involved multiple co-conspirators, and agents seized approximately 247 pounds of marijuana which ROSALES distributed to local and interstate destinations, including Atlanta, Georgia, and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The case was investigated by agents of the Fresno Methamphetamine Task Force (FMTF), a federally-funded High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Initiative (HIDTA), consisting of multiple federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), California Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, Fresno County Sheriff's Department, Fresno Police Department, Madera County Sheriff's Department, Merced County Sheriff's Department, and California Highway Patrol, with the assistance of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The investigation, dubbed Operation Green Speaker, initially targeted ROSALES and his distribution network. Concerted efforts and follow-up by law enforcement ultimately led to the discovery of ROSALES' domestic sources of marijuana supply in Mendocino County and North Fork in Madera County, California, who were operating under the guise of medicinal marijuana production, and resulted in four federal indictments, charging 43 defendants. To date, 25 of the federally-charged defendants have entered guilty pleas. The investigation also resulted in the filing of state charges by the Fresno County District Attorney's Office against additional members of ROSALES' drug trafficking organization.

"This case demonstrates our commitment to identify and dismantle significant drug trafficking organizations, particularly those which operate within our own communities by employing the facade of a legitimate business," said United States Attorney Scott. This commitment was recognized by the Office of National Drug Control Policy in January, 2006, which honored the Fresno Methamphetamine Task Force and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California for its investigation of the ROSALES drug trafficking organization.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, ROSALES faces a mandatory minimum prison term of ten years, a maximum prison term of life, and a fine of up to \$4,000,000 for the marijuana conspiracy to which he pled guilty. ROSALES, who is scheduled to be sentenced on December 11, 2006, before Senior District Judge Oliver W. Wanger, has agreed that he will not seek a sentence of less than ten years in prison.

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